



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 108th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 150

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 2004

No. 82

House of Representatives

The House met at 8:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. KIRK).

DESIGNATION OF THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 15, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable MARK STEVEN KIRK to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:
Lord God,

Your steadfast love stirs us to look beyond self-interest. Your Divine Providence has guided this Nation from the beginning and has always urged us to look beyond our frontiers. Your Spirit in gathering the 108th Congress today moves us to have great aspirations for this world and for our times.

Having tasted Your blessings of freedom ourselves, we long for all humanity to enjoy equal justice under law and so we pray this short but powerful ancient psalm:

“O praise the Lord, all you nations,
Acclaim the Lord all you peoples.
Strong is his love of us;
Our God is faithful forever.”
Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair desires to make an announcement.

After consultation with the majority and minority leaders, and with their consent and approval, the Chair announces that during the joint meeting to hear an address by His Excellency Hamid Karzai, President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, only the doors immediately opposite the Speaker and those on his right and left will be open.

No one will be allowed on the floor of the House who does not have the privilege of the floor of the House.

Due to the large attendance that is anticipated, the Chair feels that the rule regarding the privilege of the floor must be strictly adhered to.

Children of Members will not be permitted on the floor, and the cooperation of all Members is requested.

The practice of reserving seats prior to the joint meeting by placard will not be allowed. Members may reserve their seats by physical presence only following a security sweep of the Chamber.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, June 8, 2004, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 34 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

During the recess, beginning at about 9:21 a.m., the following proceedings were had:

□ 0921

JOINT MEETING OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HAMID KARZAI, PRESIDENT OF THE TRANSITIONAL ISLAMIC STATE OF AFGHANISTAN

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Kerri Hanley, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort His Excellency Hamid Karzai, the President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT);

The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE);

The gentleman from California (Mr. COX);

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. GOSS);

The gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI);

The gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER);

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ);

The gentlewoman from California (Ms. HARMAN);

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON); and

The gentleman from New York (Mr. ACKERMAN).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort His Excellency Hamid Karzai, the President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST);

The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL);

The Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS);

The Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM);

The Senator from Texas (Mrs. HUTCHISON);

The Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL);

The Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER);

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE);

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);

The Senator from Louisiana (Mr. BREAUX);

The Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN);

The Senator from Michigan (Ms. Stabenow); and

The Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON).

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Jesse Bibiano Marehalau, Ambassador of the Federated States of Micronesia.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Assistant to the Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 9 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m., the Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced His Excellency Hamid Karzai, President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.

The President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and stood at the Clerk's desk.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, it is my great privilege and I deem it a high honor and a personal pleasure to present to you His Excellency Hamid Karzai, President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.

[Applause, the Members rising.]

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HAMID KARZAI, PRESIDENT OF THE TRANSITIONAL ISLAMIC STATE OF AFGHANISTAN

President KARZAI. Thank you for the great honor. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, the great people of the United States of America, it is my distinct honor to speak on behalf of the Afghan people in this august assembly.

I thank you and the people of this great country for your generosity and commitment to our people. You have supported us with your resources, with your leadership in the world community and, most importantly, with the precious lives of your soldiers.

With your support, Afghanistan has accomplished a number of significant achievements. We have begun to rebuild our schools. Over 5 million children, boys and girls, attend schools across Afghanistan. We have also commenced to develop health centers to provide basic services to our people, especially to our women and children, who have suffered the most during the decades of war and turmoil. We have embarked upon the reconstruction of our roads to encourage traders and businessmen to transport products to markets.

We have started to reconstitute our national army, our national institutions, national police, in order to both defend our sovereignty and provide security to our citizens. Our national army is being trained by American forces, American troops, and wherever we have deployed them the Afghan people have welcomed them. We have initiated the fight against narcotics to save our children, to save your children and children across the world from the evil of addiction to drugs.

The confidence of our citizens in the future of our country is clearly signified by the return of 3 million refugees in the past 2 years.

Once again, ladies and gentlemen, Afghanistan is the home of all Afghans. We have today in Afghanistan our former king back in his old home. We have today in Afghanistan the leaders of the former resistance of Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. We have also millions of refugees who have left Afghanistan because of tyranny and invasion. They are all back in their country, and more are returning.

Ladies and gentlemen, Afghanistan has emerged from a very dark era, one of oppression and terror. We have adopted an enlightened Constitution, establishing a democratic Islamic government. It guarantees equal rights and equal protection for every citizen of our country. With your support, men and women of Afghanistan have now equal rights before the law and the Constitution. The new Constitution replaces the Taliban-imposed gender discrimination by assigning 25 percent of the seats in our future parliament for women. Together we have furthered democracy by creating a climate where 35 percent of the voters so far registered

for our election are women. And as I speak today, ladies and gentlemen, I received a report this morning from the election commission in the central part of the country that the registrars for voting are more than 50 percent women, and in the rest of the country they are more than 30 percent. As this process continues through September, we will have at least 6 to 7 million registered, and I am sure we will reach nearly 70 percent of them to be women.

We have secured and opened an inclusive society where minority languages are accorded official recognition and where the press enjoys unprecedented freedom.

We, the Afghan people, have once again established ourselves as a proud and sovereign nation. Without your support and commitment and without the partnership between our two nations, none of this would have been achieved.

Ladies and gentlemen, together we have come a long way, but our common journey is far from over. Many obstacles exist, and numerous milestones remain to be reached before we can fully realize our shared vision of a stable, prosperous and democratic Afghanistan.

We have to travel further. Private militias pose a threat to the consolidation of stability and democracy in our country. They continue to oppress our people and challenge law, order and government authority. The Afghan people demand and insist on disarming and demobilizing private militias. Only with your support and that of the international community can we achieve this necessary goal.

We are also confronted with the evil of narcotics. Drug profits finance private militias, terrorists and extremists. Drug profits undermine our efforts to build a healthy and legitimate national economy. Drugs threaten the lives and future of children, yours and ours. We are determined to cleanse Afghanistan from this menace.

In the economic dimension, despite our achievements over the past 2½ years, we continue to be one of the poorest countries. We still have the second highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world. We have one of the highest illiteracy rates. Very few Afghans have access to safe drinking water. While our country has rich hydroelectric potential, oil, gas and coal reserves, only 6 percent of the Afghans have reliable access to electricity. While Afghanistan has great rivers, our farmers ironically suffer from a shortage of water. Even now our vast mineral resources such as iron ore, copper and precious stones remain undeveloped. Our delicious fruits are not reaching major markets due to the lack of refrigeration and proper marketing.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are significant impediments, yet we are confident that with your continued support and commitment, we, the Afghan